

had become partisans of Great Britain. In May, detachments of the regiment were posted at Saratoga (Schuylerville), Fort Edward, Fort Ann, and Fort Dayton on the German Flats, seventy-five miles west of Albany, on the Mohawk River. The second, then under command of Colonel Philip van Cortlandt, having been recruited and organized "for the war," was stationed at Peekskill. The third, to the command of which Colonel Peter Gansevoort, junior, had been appointed, was assigned to garrison duty at Fort Constitution. The fourth, commanded by Colonel Henry B. Livingston, was, as the second, stationed at Peekskill. The fifth, in command of Colonel Lewis DuBois, was garrisoning Forts Montgomery and Clinton, on the opposite banks of the Pollepel Kill.¹

Major-General Heath having been appointed to the command of the eastern department, Brigadier-General Alexander McDougall was given the command of the troops at Peekskill.

On March 22, shortly after the breaking up of the ice on the Hudson, several British warships ascended the river as far as Peekskill. About five hundred troops of the English army disembarked and burned the buildings in which the stores of the continental army were deposited. No attempt was apparently made to prevent the enemy from accomplishing the destruction of the buildings and their contents until late in the day, when a part of the Third New York Regiment, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Marinus Willett, advanced toward the British force. It is related that as soon as the continentals approached within the range of its muskets, the enemy fired upon them, and then retreated toward the vessels anchored in the river. It is further said that so great was the trepidation of the British troops "that in the course of two hours they were all on board of their shipping. What baggage the enemy had was left. It consisted only of a few blankets and cloaks. Lieutenant-Colonel Willett had but two men killed and four or five wounded."²

The report that about fifteen hundred British troops had burned the valuable stores at Peekskill Landing, and an apprehension of further destruction of property near the river, caused the New York provincial congress to take, on March 25, the following action:

"Resolved, That Colonel Jacobus Swartwout be and he hereby is authorized, empowered, and required at his discretion to call out all or such part of the militia of Dutchess County as he may from time to time think necessary for the security of the important forts and passes in the Highlands and to oppose the incursions of the enemy into this state, and that he have power to

¹ The New York continental line of the army of the Revolution. By Asa Bird Gardiner. Magazine of American History, vol. vii., pp. 407, 408, 409, 410. Journals of the provincial congress. Albany, 1842, vol. i., p. 832.

² A narrative of the military actions of Colonel Marinus Willett. 1831, pp. 40-42.